

Bruce Perens, “The Open Source Definition”

Read the article at <http://opensource.org/docs/osd>

Background

As a result of fundamental differences between free software and open sources, there was a need to more clearly define what open really meant and differentiate it from free. The Open Source Definition (OSD) helped to clarify what was meant by open and to distinguish the open movement from the free software movement. Like the DFSG on which it is based, the OSD is used primarily to determine whether or not software licenses qualify for the label “open source.”

Key Points

- Free Redistribution
- Source Code
- Derived Works
- Integrity of The Author’s Source Code
- No Discrimination Against Persons or Groups
- No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor
- Distribution of License
- License Must Not Be Specific to a Product
- License Must Not Restrict Other Software
- License Must Be Technology-Neutral

The definition contains the same conditions as Debian with the addition that the License must be technology neutral – the license can’t require that any specific technology or interface.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Debian Free Software Guidelines influence the Open Definition?
2. Why is open not the same as free?
3. Is Google Open? Free? Neither? Both? Why?

Additional Resources

Debian Social Contract. (1997). Debian Social Contract, Version 1.0. Retrieved from <https://edtechbooks.org/-NQxq>



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